

Childhood Blood Lead Screening:

A Reference Sheet for Healthcare Providers



Screening Guidelines

- ◆ **Children enrolled in MaineCare must be given a blood lead test at 1 year and 2 years of age regardless of risk for lead poisoning.** (To fulfill the MaineCare requirement, a one-year-old can be tested between 9 & 18 months of age; a two-year-old can be tested between 18 & 35 months of age.)
- ◆ **Children not enrolled in MaineCare should be given a blood lead test at 1 year and 2 years of age unless the child is not at risk for lead poisoning.** (See questions below to determine level of risk.)
- ◆ Screen all children 36-72 months of age if they have not previously been tested, or they have changed their residence since their previous blood lead screening and are determined to be at risk for lead exposure.
- ◆ Testing for lead should also be considered in:
 - ◆ Children diagnosed with pica, developmental delays, behavioral problems, or ADHD
 - ◆ Children presenting with unexplained illness such as severe anemia, lethargy, or abdominal pain



Lead Risk Questions to Ask Parents

If a child's parent or guardian answers "yes" to, or is unsure about one or more of these questions, the child should be given a blood lead test.

- ◆ Does your child spend more than 10 hours per week in any house built before 1950?
- ◆ Does your child spend more than 10 hours per week in any house built before 1978 that has been renovated or remodeled within the past 6 months?
- ◆ Does your child spend time with an adult whose job exposes him or her to lead? (Examples: construction, painting, metalwork)
- ◆ Is your child enrolled in MaineCare?



Sources of Lead Exposure

Lead dust is the most common way for children to get lead into their bodies. This is especially true for young children who have a lot of hand-to-mouth activity. **Lead dust can be caused by deteriorating lead paint, be brought home and into vehicles on clothing from construction or painting jobs, or can come from home renovation projects.**

Other sources of lead exposure:

- ◆ Soil, especially next to old buildings
- ◆ Antiques or old painted furniture or toys
- ◆ Hobbies or jobs (stained glass, fishing sinkers, lead shot, furniture refinishing)
- ◆ Consumer products (imported toys, jewelry)
- ◆ Folk remedies (Greta, Arzacon, Pay-loo-ah, Kohl, Kandu) and some herbal remedies (Ayurvedic)
- ◆ Water from old pipes (lead pipes, lead solder, brass fixtures and valves)



Ways to Prevent Lead Exposure

- ◆ Keep children away from peeling or chipping paint.
- ◆ Wash child's hands often and always before eating and going to bed.
- ◆ Wash painted windows and floors using water and detergent, rather than dry cleaning methods.
- ◆ Leave shoes at the door to keep leaded dirt outside.
- ◆ Before beginning a remodeling or repainting project, call MCLPPP to learn about lead-safe work methods.
- ◆ For homes with old pipes, use cold water for drinking and cooking. Run the water for 1-2 minutes if the tap has not been used in the last 4 hours. To have water tested for lead, call the State of Maine Health and Environmental Testing Lab (HETL) at (207) 287-2727.



John E. Baldacci, Governor

Department of Health
and Human Services

Maine People Living
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Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner



How to Test

- ◆ Blood collection supplies and mailers may be obtained at no cost by calling the State of Maine Health and Environmental Testing Lab (HETL) at (207) 287-2727.
- ◆ Collect either a capillary or venous specimen.
- ◆ Wash and scrub any dust or dirt off the finger or toe with a surgical brush or soft toothbrush to obtain an accurate capillary specimen.
- ◆ State law requires that all blood lead specimens obtained from Maine children less than 6 years old be processed by HETL. Mail the specimen to HETL, 221 State Street, SHS #12, Augusta, ME 04333. Mailing labels are included with the HETL supplies.



Follow-Up Blood Lead Tests

- ◆ All capillary results $\geq 10 \mu\text{g/dl}$ must be confirmed with a venous specimen.
- ◆ Use the following CDC recommendations to determine timing of follow-up blood lead testing:

Venous blood level	Routine follow-up (2-4 tests after identification)	Long-term follow-up (after BLL begins to decline)
10-14 $\mu\text{g/dl}$	3 months	6-9 months
15-19 $\mu\text{g/dl}$	2 months	3-6 months
$\geq 20 \mu\text{g/dl}$	1 month	1-3 months
$\geq 45 \mu\text{g/dl}$	Repeat venous blood test immediately; Chelation therapy	Based on chelation protocol



How to Bill

- ◆ Children with private insurance or private pay: Bill patient or insurance for both the lab analysis fee and the blood draw. HETL will bill providers for the lab analysis fee.
- ◆ Children with MaineCare as primary insurance: Bill MaineCare for the blood draw. Check MaineCare on the HETL lab slip, include the Maine Care number; and HETL will bill MaineCare for the lab analysis fee.
- ◆ For maximum reimbursement, include the diagnosis and procedure codes. If you have questions about billing, call your provider relations specialist at 1-800-321-5557.



MCLPP Interventions

Venous blood level	Childhood Lead Program Interventions
10-14 $\mu\text{g/dl}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ MCLPPP sends educational materials to family
$\geq 15 \mu\text{g/dl}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ MCLPPP sends educational materials to family ◆ MCLPPP refers to Public Health Nurses for case management ◆ MCLPPP refers for environmental lead investigation (mandatory for rental units, offered to parents if in owner-occupied home)

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